



Arizona Smokers' Helpline

1-800-55-66-222

www.ASHLine.org

STEPHEN MICHAEL, DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Smokeless Tobacco — Chew, Dip, Snus and Snuff are on the Rise among Arizona's Youth

Feb. 20-26 is "Through With Chew" Week

Smokeless tobacco has many names — chew, dip, snuff, snus — and is a growing problem, especially among Arizona's young people who often use it as a cheap and convenient substitute for cigarettes.

The 2010 Arizona Youth Survey (AYS)¹ found that smokeless tobacco use is rising among 8th through 12th graders in Arizona. Rates are as high as eight percent (8%) among 12th grade students. This increased from 5.4 percent of 12th grade students in 2004 to 8.1 percent in 2010.

"This is an alarming trend," says Carolyn Holman of the Maricopa County Department of Public Health, Office of Oral Health. "We've done a good job getting the message to youth about the dangers of smoking — we need to also make sure they know chewing tobacco is dangerous."

The percentage of adults using chew in Arizona has held at 3.08 percent. This means approximately 139,000 Arizonans are smokeless tobacco users. (2009 AZ BRFSS). Overall, more men than women use chew tobacco.²

In response to both declining cigarette sales and tougher smoke-free laws around the country, tobacco companies are developing more types of chewing tobacco products and marketing them as alternatives to smoking indoors and as providing quit assistance. Tobacco companies are offering many

new addictive alternatives that come in fruit and mint flavors – and look like candies and breathe mints – which are very attractive to young people.

“Tobacco kills, no matter if it's a cigarette, a cigar, a chew or snuff, or a roll-your-own,” says Stephen S. Michael, MS, Director of the Arizona Smokers’ Helpline (ASHLine). Michael says that research of smokeless products must evaluate what harm is caused by the product along with how the product is marketed. Some tobacco companies market smokeless tobacco as a smoking quit aid. “If erroneously marketed smokeless products result in more people using tobacco, it results in even more deaths, overall.”

Michael adds, “It’s important to spread the message that smokeless tobacco doesn’t mean harmless tobacco. There are 28 known carcinogens in chew.” “Through With Chew” Week is a health recognition week designed to get the message out about the dangers of chewing tobacco and increase awareness of its negative health effects. This year, “Through With Chew” Week is Feb. 20-26. Various events will be taking place around the state to get information out to youth about the dangers of chew including a booth for youth at the Spring Training Baseball Fan Fair at the Peoria Sports Complex, 16101 N. 83rd Ave., Peoria, Ariz. on Saturday, Feb. 26 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Since a support system like ASHLine can make the difference for people who decide to stop using tobacco, it’s important that chewers know ASHLine coaches are here for them too! Michael said. The ASHLine has a nearly 40 percent successful quit rate for its clients – that’s almost two times the success rate of other quitlines nationally. ASHLine offers free telephone quit coaching at 1-800-55-66-222 (English and Spanish) and free online quit coaching services via WebQuit™ at www.ASHLine.org

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	Grade 8				Grade 10				Grade 12			
	State 2004	State 2006	State 2008	State 2010	State 2004	State 2006	State 2008	State 2010	State 2004	State 2006	State 2008	State 2010
Chewing Tobacco	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.8	3.4	4.0	4.6	5.7	5.4	5.4	6.8	8.1

1. Arizona Criminal Justice Commission: 2010 Arizona Youth Survey (AYS)

References

¹ Arizona Criminal Justice Commission. (2010). 2010 Arizona Youth Survey, State of Arizona. Retrieved January 7, 2011 from <http://www.azcjc.gov/ACJC.Web/sac/AYSReports/2010/State%20of%20Arizona%20Profile%20Report.pdf>

The question asked of respondents: *“In the past 30 days, on how many occasions (if any) have you used smokeless tobacco (chew, snuff, plug, dipping tobacco, chewing tobacco)?”*

² Office on Smoking and Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (October 29, 2010).

Smoking & Tobacco Use: Smokeless Tobacco Facts. Retrieved January 7, 2011 from

http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/smokeless/smokeless_facts/index.htm

****Interviews are available with ASHLine’s quit professionals and former Arizona chewers including but not limited to the following:**

To schedule, please call Laurie Thomas 480-540-6050.

About Stephen Michael

Stephen S. Michael, MS, is the Director of the Arizona Smokers’ Helpline (ASHLine) at the University of Arizona Zuckerman College of Public Health. The Arizona Smokers’ Helpline is funded by the Arizona Department of Health Services Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease and offers free assistance to Arizonans statewide who are trying to quit tobacco use. Mr. Michael holds a Master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, with a focus in Substance Abuse, and has over 20 years of experience in behavioral health settings. He is recognized as an authority on tobacco quitlines.

About Wayne Tormala

Dedicating his entire career to human service, Wayne has provided leadership at the local, national and global levels in programs addressing issues of public health, mental illness, the environment, world hunger, poverty, and economic justice. Currently, he is the Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease at the Arizona Department of Health Services where he oversees all aspects of tobacco prevention/cessation programming and the prevention/management of chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer, lung disease, stroke, asthma and diabetes.

About Carolyn Holman, R.D. H.

Carolyn Holman is the Coordinator for the Maricopa County Department of Public Health, Office of Oral Health Tobacco Use Prevention Program. She provides technical assistance and continuing education to dental and medical professionals so they can assist their patients in quitting tobacco use. Carolyn is a recognized expert in training oral health professionals on tobacco, and has presented at the national, state and local level.

About Arizona Smokers’ Helpline

Funded by the state tax on tobacco products through the Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease at the Arizona Department of Health Services, the Arizona Smokers’ Helpline and ASHLine.org have been helping people quit tobacco since 1995. Free telephone and Web-based quit services are provided to all Arizonans free of charge. For information, call **1-800-55-66-222** or visit **www.ASHLine.org**.

About “Through With Chew” Week

Through With Chew Week was established in 1989 by the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery, Inc. It is held the third week of February each year to bring awareness to the negative effects of all chewing tobacco products.



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Chew Tobacco Questions and Answers*

Q: What is smokeless/spit tobacco?

Answer: There are two main types of smokeless tobacco—snuff and chewing tobacco. Snuff comes in a round tin can or is packaged in small packets that look like tea bags. It is finely ground or shredded tobacco. Typically, the user places a pinch or dip between the cheek and gum. Another variety of snuff is a fine powder that is inhaled or snorted into the nose. Chewing tobacco is available in loose leaf chew, plugs, or twist. These products come in cellophane or in a pouch.

Q: What makes spit tobacco so addictive and harmful?

Answer: All tobacco products contain nicotine, which is very addictive. The most harmful carcinogens in spit and chewing tobacco are called tobacco-specific nitrosamines. These are formed during the growing, curing, fermenting and aging of American tobacco. According to the Mayo Clinic (www.mayoclinic.com), some spit tobacco products contain additives that increase the rate at which nicotine is absorbed into the body. If you look at the types of spit, chew and snuff sold in retail outlets, you will notice different products for the beginner; they are easily identified by their sweet, fruity flavors (apple, cherry, peach, etc.) and often come in easy-to-use pouches. Over time, the spit and snuff user graduates to product that contain more nicotine. Someone who has chewed for a long time uses stronger product and uses it more frequently to receive the same effect. Check out the American Dental Association website (www.ada.org) for a list of some of the cancer-causing chemicals found in spit tobacco.

Q: Are spit, chew and snuff safe alternatives to cigarettes?

Answer: No, they are not a safe alternative. Some tobacco companies promote smokeless products by claiming they are less of a health risk than smoking cigarettes. Smoked or smokeless, all tobacco use is risky and may cause cancer as well as other diseases.

Q: Why is spit/chew use so prominent in the west?

Answer: Spit tobacco has long been associated with the western lifestyle, which includes cowboy culture, rodeo and outdoor recreation. The tobacco industry heavily promotes its products to people who participate in those activities.

Q: What signs are there of negative health effects from spit tobacco use?

Answer: Spit tobacco users should check monthly for damage to teeth, gums, the tongue and surrounding tissue which may indicate early warning signs of cancer. As deadly as mouth cancer is, the chances of surviving are much better when found early. At a minimum, on a monthly basis, conduct an oral screening using a mirror and good lighting. Check:

Face and neck – Look in the mirror. Do both sides of your face and neck look the same? Gently press your jawbone to feel for lumps.

Check lips and gums – Pull down your lower lip. Are there white or red patches or sores that bleed easily? Are there any signs of irritation, like tenderness, burning or sores that will not heal? Look very carefully at where you place your tobacco. Do you see color changes or rough areas?

Squeeze your **lip and cheek** between your fingers. Are there bumps or soreness?

Roof of the mouth – Tilt your head back and open wide. Do you see any discoloration, sores, bumps or swelling?

Floor of the mouth – Put the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth. With one finger, press around the floor of your mouth. Do you feel sores, bumps or swelling?

Tongue – Stick your tongue out. Grab it with a clean piece of cloth or paper towel. Move your tongue from side to side. Do you see any color changes or bumps?

If you see any of these signs, see a doctor or dentist right away. Be sure to tell your health care provider that you use spit tobacco.

Warning: If you see any discolored skin, feel any bumps or soreness, or have a sore in the mouth that does not heal within two weeks, this may be an early warning sign of cancer.

*The questions and answers courtesy of Wyoming "Through with Chew" sponsored by the Wyoming Department of Health, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division.